

TRAVEL

Take a day trip to Grundy County where Swiss traditions and new ventures coexist. **On 3J**

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SUNDAY, JULY 13, 2008

THREE-DAY ESCAPE

World's Longest Yard Sale

puts treasures, culture on display

By **MARGARET LITTMAN**
For *The Tennessean*

The Highway 127 World's Longest Yard Sale is for collectors. Not just collectors of Fiestaware, old tools or marbles, although there are plenty of those treasures to be found. But collectors of culture will enjoy meandering through the South's back roads during four days of extreme treasure hunting each August.

Early in August — this year the dates are Aug. 7-10 — an estimated 4,000 vendors line Highway 127 all the way from Defiance, Ohio, to Gadsden, Ala. That's about 630 miles of pulled pork sandwiches, cookie jars in the shape of a monk, board games you haven't thought of in decades, and piles and piles of other American ephemera.

While there's no rhyme or reason to what's where, each state — Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky and Ohio — has its own distinct feel. Near Dunnville, Ky., baked goods alongside a horse churning ice cream by walking on a treadmill shows off the area's strong Amish roots. Boiled peanuts are offered up throughout Alabama and Georgia, while kudzu-covered trees provide a lush, if invasive, back-

drop throughout Tennessee.

High-end to bargains

If you are the kind of traveler who likes your vacation planned to a "T," the World's Longest Yard Sale may not be your cup of tea. While the Fentress County Chamber of Commerce, headquartered in Jamestown, Tenn., is officially the sale's organizer, much of the event is serendipity.

The sale was designed to give travelers an incentive to forgo the interstates in favor of the back roads. So all along Highway 127 folks set up tables of antiques, junk and everything in between, and visitors pile in the car, making sudden turns into appealing parking lots and driveways. At times traffic slows to a standstill. In many spots, such as in front of the Cumberland Mountain General Store in Clarkrange, Tenn., locals lease space to antiques dealers who have high-end stock to sell.

"We have had the same 75-100 people come back for the last 15 years," says Ron Jones, owner of the Cumberland Mountain General Store. "We tell people we do not do 'wares.' No Tupperware. No

► Please see **SALE, 4J**

From Alabama to Ohio, Highway 127 lures travelers to back roads for junk, antiques and everything in between



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COURTESY OF VANESSA IP

The World's Longest Yard Sale in early August draws thousands of people to Highway 127 from Ohio to Alabama.

WHAT TO PACK

Even hard-core flea market fans may be surprised by the endurance nature of the Highway 127 sale. Pack carefully.

Water. No matter how much water you intend to bring, add more. Temperatures are likely to soar and your muscles will be sore from carrying purchases. Refillable bottles or a frozen jug that will thaw over time in the trunk are best.

Small denominations. Bring lots of singles. Small bills — \$1s, \$5s and \$10s — will help you negotiate prices. It is hard to sweet-talk a vendor into a lower price if you have to ask for change from a \$20.

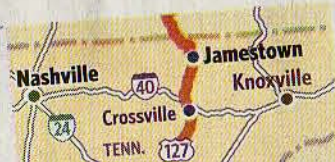
Wipes. You'll be walking through dusty parking lots, using portable toilets and wiping sweat off your brow.

Packing materials. Bubble wrap, newspaper and the like will help you get your treasures home safely.

Wheeled luggage carts. Or strollers. Or anything that'll make it easier to get items from the dealer's booth to your car. Sure, carrying that cast-iron planter across the parking lot isn't tough. But doing it multiple times can wear a shopper out.

Reference materials. If you are hunting for specific items, such as home décor or items to complete a collection, bring what you need to make a decision, such as room measurements, color swatches and lists of collectibles you already own.

COURTESY OF
VANESSA IP



See a map of the route on Page 4J



County. www.discoverlookoutmountain.com/n/cabins.shtml.
 Gables Bed 'n' Breakfast Inn. Historic, utopian
 m Highway 127, but it feels worlds away from
 yard sale. Highway 52, Rugby, 423-628-
 n.
 t and Lace Inn. This two-story bed-and-
 off Highway 127. The bedrooms and bath-
 curious. 540 E. Main St., Danville, 859-236-
 l, www.walnutandlaceinn.com.



COURTESY OF VANESSA IP

Thousands of shoppers and collectors are expected for the World's Longest Yard Sale along its 630-mile route Aug. 7-10.

Blues

9.4000 . 1.800.PEABODY

Preferred HOTEL GROUP

Sale: 630-mile route is an endurance test

FROM PAGE 1J

underwear. We only have old stuff, like neat old advertising signs, estate jewelry and high-end glass."

Elsewhere, the wares appear to be simply the contents of the basement of someone who lives along Highway 127, or even a lone stroller with a price tag in a driveway.

Mary Belle Dailey has invited friends and family to bring things to sell in front of her son's fabric store near Frankfort, Ky., for years. This year she plans to sell homemade lye soap, because she has sold all the "ordinary stuff" she had stockpiled. One year

Dailey even dug up some lily bulbs in the yard after a shopper admired her plants.

"We really enjoy meeting people. We have had them stop by from just about every state. Last year somebody stopped by from Oklahoma, and they might be kin to us. My husband was from Oklahoma," Dailey says.

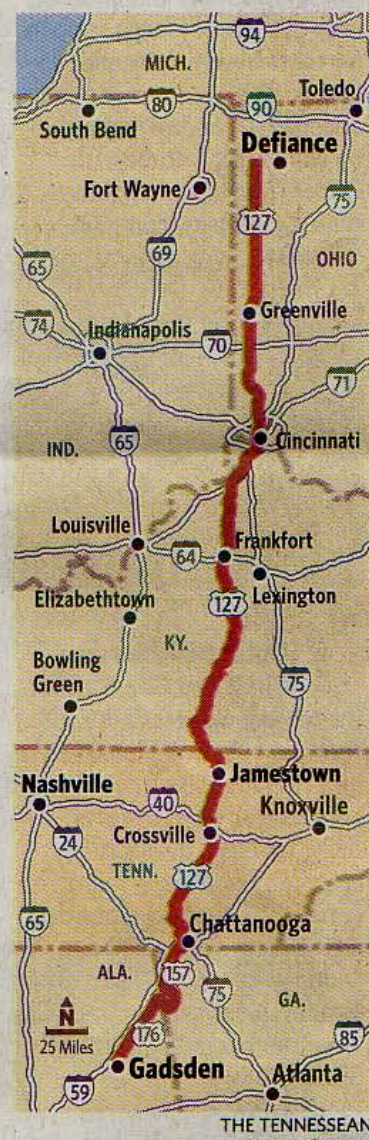
Some of Dailey's friends run their tables as fundraisers for 4H, senior citizen centers or local church groups.

Who needs a cowbell?

Chicagoan Ellen Malloy found herself as the source of entertainment as she drove north on Highway 127 last year. The later it got in the weekend, the more full her car got. On her final stops she noticed people in the parking lots watching to see how she could possibly fit another find — such as a wooden drying rack or ruby red drinking glasses — into her stuffed SUV.

Malloy was embarrassed by her conspicuous consumption but pleased with her finds and her ability to get them home safely.

As gas prices and other expenses have escalated, Malloy has had to rethink her budget this year. Rather than focus on items that complete a collection, this year Malloy intends to spend her time looking for those one-of-a-kind finds, the things she didn't know she wanted until she saw it, like last year's cast-iron cowbell. Something every city girl needs.



THE TENNESSEAN

3-DAY ITINERARY

Day 1: Start near Lookout Mountain, Tenn. In addition to flea market finds, enjoy the scenery of Desoto State Park and the Desoto Falls Scenic Byway. www.desotostatepark.com

Day 2: Drive north on Highway 127, stopping when something strikes your fancy. Check out Rugby, Tenn., an 1800s utopian town near Big South Fork recreation area. www.historicrugby.org

Day 3: Head north on the sale route and stop to see the historic district of Frankfort, Ky., and the state Capitol. www.visitfrankfort.com

